(19) And render, ‘if he abides seven nights without and is not visited (with a dream, this shows that) he is evil’.

Talmud - Mas. Berachoth 14b

The Lord God is truth.[1] Does he repeat the word ‘true’[2] or does he not repeat the word ‘true’? — R. Abbahu said in the name of R. Johanan: He repeats the word ‘true’; Rabbah says: He does not repeat the word ‘true’. A certain man went down to act as reader before Rabbah, and Rabbah heard him say ‘truth, truth’, twice; whereupon he remarked: The whole of truth has got hold of this man.[3]

R. Joseph said: How fine was the statement which was brought by R. Samuel b. Judah when he reported that in the West [Palestine] they say [in the evening], Speak unto the children of Israel and thou shalt say unto them, I am the Lord your God, True.[4] Said Abaye to him: What is there so fine about it, seeing that R. Kahana has said in the name of Rab: [In the evening] one need not begin [this third section of the Shema’] but if he does begin, he should go through with it? And should you say that the words, ‘and thou shalt say unto them’ do not constitute a beginning, has not R. Samuel b. Isaac said in the name of Rab, ‘Speak unto the children of Israel’ is no beginning, but ‘and thou shalt say unto them’ is a beginning? — R. Papa said: In the West they hold that ‘and thou shalt say unto them’ also is no beginning, until one says, ‘and they shall make unto themselves fringes’. Abaye said: Therefore we [in Babylon] begin [the section], because they begin it in the West; and since we begin we go through with it, because R. Kahana has said in the name of Rab: One need not begin, but if he begins he should go through with it.

Hiyya b. Rab said: If one has said [in the evening] ‘I am the Lord your God,’ he must say also, ‘True [etc.]’; if he has not said ‘I am the Lord your God’, he need not say ‘True’. But one has to mention the going forth from Egypt?[5] — He can say thus: We give thanks to Thee O Lord our God, that Thou hast brought us forth from the land of Egypt and redeemed us from the house of servitude and wrought for us miracles and mighty deeds, by the [Red] Sea, and we did sing unto Thee.[6]

R. JOSHUA B. KORHAH SAID: WHY IS THE SECTION OF ‘HEAR’ SAID BEFORE etc. It has been taught: R. Simeon b. Yohai says: It is right that ‘Hear’ should come before ‘And it shall come to pass because the former prescribes learning[7] and the latter teaching,[8] and that ‘and it shall come to pass’ should precede ‘And the Lord said’ because the former prescribes teaching and the latter performance. But does then ‘hear’ speak only of learning and not also of teaching and doing? Is it not written therein, ‘And thou shalt teach diligently, and thou shalt bind them and thou shalt write them’? Also, does ‘and it shall come to pass’ speak only of teaching and not also of performance? Is it not written therein, ‘and ye shall bind and ye shall write’? — Rather this is what he means to say: It is right that ‘hear’ should precede ‘and it shall come to pass’, because the former mentions both learning, teaching, and doing; and that ‘and it shall come to pass’ should precede ‘and the Lord said’, because the former mentions both teaching and doing, whereas the latter mentions doing only. But is not the reason given by R. Joshua b. Korhah sufficient? — He [R. Simeon b. Yohai] gave an additional reason. One is that he should first accept Upon himself the yoke of the kingdom of heaven and then accept the yoke of the commandments. A further reason is that it [the first section] has these other features.

Rab once washed his hands and recited the Shema’ and put on tefillin and said the tefillah. But how could he act in this way,[9] seeing that it has been taught: ‘One who digs a niche in a grave for a corpse is exempt from reciting Shema’ and tefillah and from tefillin and from all the commandments prescribed in the Torah. When the hour for reciting the Shema’ arrives, he goes up and washes his hands and puts on tefillin and recites the Shema’ and says the tefillah?’ Now this statement itself contains a contradiction. First it says that he is exempt and then it says that he is under obligation? — This is no difficulty; the latter clause speaks of where there are two,[10] the former of where there is only one. In any case this seems to contradict Rab? — Rab held with R. Joshua b. Korhah, who said